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PRESS RELEASE

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Senators look to further restrict use of eminent domain on petroleum pipelines

ATLANTA – In an effort to place further restrictions on the use of eminent domain when pipeline companies are constructing additional pipelines, state Senators Ross Tolleson (R-Perry) and John Bulloch (R-Ochlocknee), authors of the legislation that would allow pipeline companies to build additional pipes next to their existing lines, amended the legislation to address issues raised regarding potential pipeline expansion.

Sen. Tolleson and Sen. Bulloch appeared before the House of Representatives Judiciary Committee today to offer an amendment to Senate Bill 173. The Senators offered this change in response to critics' concerns that the legislation would allow pipeline companies to condemn excessive amounts of land around existing pipelines.

"I have worked with Sens. [George] Hooks (D-Americus) and Tolleson to create an amendment that addresses the concerns of those opposed to this vital legislation," Sen. Bulloch said. "We understand the apprehension of those opposed to the construction of new pipelines, but we must move this legislation forward if Georgia hopes to maintain its economic leadership in the Southeast."

The amendment makes four additional changes to the legislation the Senate passed earlier this year. The first change would reduce the amount of additional right a way that a pipeline company could

condemn, from 75 feet to 50 feet contiguous to the existing pipeline. Another change limits a company to no more than a 50 foot corridor, within one mile of the existing pipeline, if the additional pipeline was forced to break away from a contiguous path. Additionally, a change requested by the Georgia realty industry would change the wording of the exemptions listed in the bill to more acceptable language regarding “densely developed residential or commercial area[s].”

The final, and perhaps most significant change restricts provisions regarding the construction of an additional pipeline only when it is contiguous to a permanent easement containing a 30 inch or larger diameter pipe, which was in existence on January 1, 2007.

“We hope this last change will satisfy those most critical of the bill,” said Sen. Tolleson. “Currently, there are only three corridors in the state that contain 30 inch or larger pipes; a corridor running from Alabama to Bremen, a corridor running from Alabama to a north Atlanta transfer station and a corridor running from that transfer station out to South Carolina. This legislation will only affect these areas.”

The House Judiciary Committee will meet next month to vote on the amendment and legislation. If the Committee passes SB 173, it will move to the House of Representatives for a vote.

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Sen. Ross Tolleson serves as Chairman of the Natural Resources and the Environment Committee. He represents the 20th Senate District which includes Bleckley, Dodge, Johnson, Laurens, Pulaski, and Telfair counties and parts of Houston and Wilcox counties. He may be reached by phone at 404.656.0081 or via e-mail at ross.tolleson@senate.ga.gov.

Sen. John Bulloch serves as Chairman of the Agriculture and Consumer Affairs Committee. He represents the 11th Senate District which includes Colquitt, Decatur, Early, Grady, Miller and Seminole counties and portions of Mitchell and Thomas counties. He may be reached by phone at 404.656.0040 or by e-mail at john.bulloch@senate.ga.gov.

Sen. George Hooks represents the 14th Senate District which include Dooly, Macon, Marion, Peach, Schley, Stewart, Sumter, Talbot, Taylor, Upson and Webster Counties and portions of Crawford County. He can be reached at his office at 404.656.0065 or by email at george.hooks@senate.ga.gov.